There was no objection.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. CHENEY. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 481

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.—Mr. Kevin Hern of Oklahoma, to rank immediately after Mr. Norman.

(2) COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR.—Mr. Keller.

(3) COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM.—Mr. Keller.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REQUEST TO CONSIDER H.R. 962, BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SURVIVORS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 962, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded in section 956 of the House Rules and Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the request unless it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I urge the Speaker to immediately schedule this important bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has not been recognized for debate.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 2500.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 476 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2500.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1702

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2500) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with Mr. CUELLAR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chair, this, as always, is an incredibly important piece of legislation. This is a piece of legislation by which we provide for the national security of this country, and every little bit, as importantly, we provide for the men and women who put their lives on the line to provide for the national security of this country.

For 58 years, we have passed the National Defense Authorization Act. It is the one piece of legislation that has not failed to pass in that timeframe, and there is a very good reason for that: It is enormously important, and it is our opportunity to show those men and women who serve in the military that we support them, we support what they do, and we are going to make sure that they have all that they need to carry out the missions that we ask them to do.

One of the reasons that we have always been able to be successful on this is because of the very strong bipartisan tradition of our committee. We have worked with various chairmen and ranking members across the aisle for all of those years and really made sure that we worked together, regardless of who was in the majority, to produce a product that we can be proud of—and we have.

On that measure, as we have moved in the majority this year, my staff and I have worked very hard with the ranking member and with all the members of the committee and their staffs to maintain that bipartisan tradition.

When we had the bill in committee, we had a large number of proposals, which I will read to you.

There were 736 proposals from Republicans, 889 from Democrats. We put into our bill 53 percent of the Republican requests and 52 percent of the Democratic requests.

In amendments, there were more Democratic amendments in committee, 266 to 248 for the Republicans, but, still, we accepted 57 percent of the Republican amendments.

On the floor, there were a lot more amendments from Democrats, 480 to 201, but, again, we accepted 50 percent of the Republican amendments.

My staff and I and other members, personally, on a large number of issues, most notably on nuclear issues—Mr. TURNER, who is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, was concerned that we weren't working together properly on a number of nuclear issues. There were 10 or 12 or more. I reached out to him. We worked together, and we resolved half of them, because that is what we do. This is a very strong bill that everybody on this floor should feel proud to vote for.

Now, there are a couple of issues, but the biggest thing is remember what is in this bill. Once again, we give a very high pay raise to the men and women who serve, 3.1 percent pay raise.

We have also, through the amendment process, included a priority that has over 300 cosponsors in the House, and that is JOE WILSON's bill to finally eliminate the offset that cuts the amount of money that goes to widows of men and women who have passed away in the military. This is the bill to eliminate that offset. There is a lot in this bill that we can be proud of.

Now, the issues that we have had disagreement on, I understand, but we always have disagreements. It is a large bill. I don't like everything in this bill. I don't think anybody does, but we cannot forget the central mission of this bill: to support the men and women who serve the military and to make sure that we have a strong national security.

The number one issue is how much money we spend.

Let me just say—and I think there is bipartisan agreement on this—we need a budget caps deal. A continuing resolution is unacceptable.

It is unacceptable for the entire discretionary budget, and it is certainly unacceptable for the Department of Defense, which can't simply keep doing what it has been doing. There are always programs they need to get rid of and new programs they need to create. We need to get a deal on that. But the number that we marked to, $733 billion, was the number that the Pentagon planned for for over a year.

After we got the last budget deal to get $716 billion, the Pentagon planned on what their next year's budget would be, and the President and the Pentagon put together a $733 billion budget for over a year. But then, at the end of last year, the President felt that number was too high.

By the way, I think I might agree with him. I think there are greater efficiencies to get out of the Pentagon.

So he said it ought to be cut by 5 percent; it ought to be $700 billion. A number of people protested that, went to the Pentagon and said: You can't cut it to 700.